A

DISCOURSE

OF THE

Nature and Excellency

OF THE

Grace of Patience:

Delivered in Two

SERMONS.

By *ELIAS KEACH.*

Preached just upon his present Sore and Great Afflictions.

ROM. V. iii. iv.

iii. *But we Glory in Tribulation, also knowing, that Tribulation worketh Patience.*

iv. *Patience Experience, and Experience Hope,* &c.

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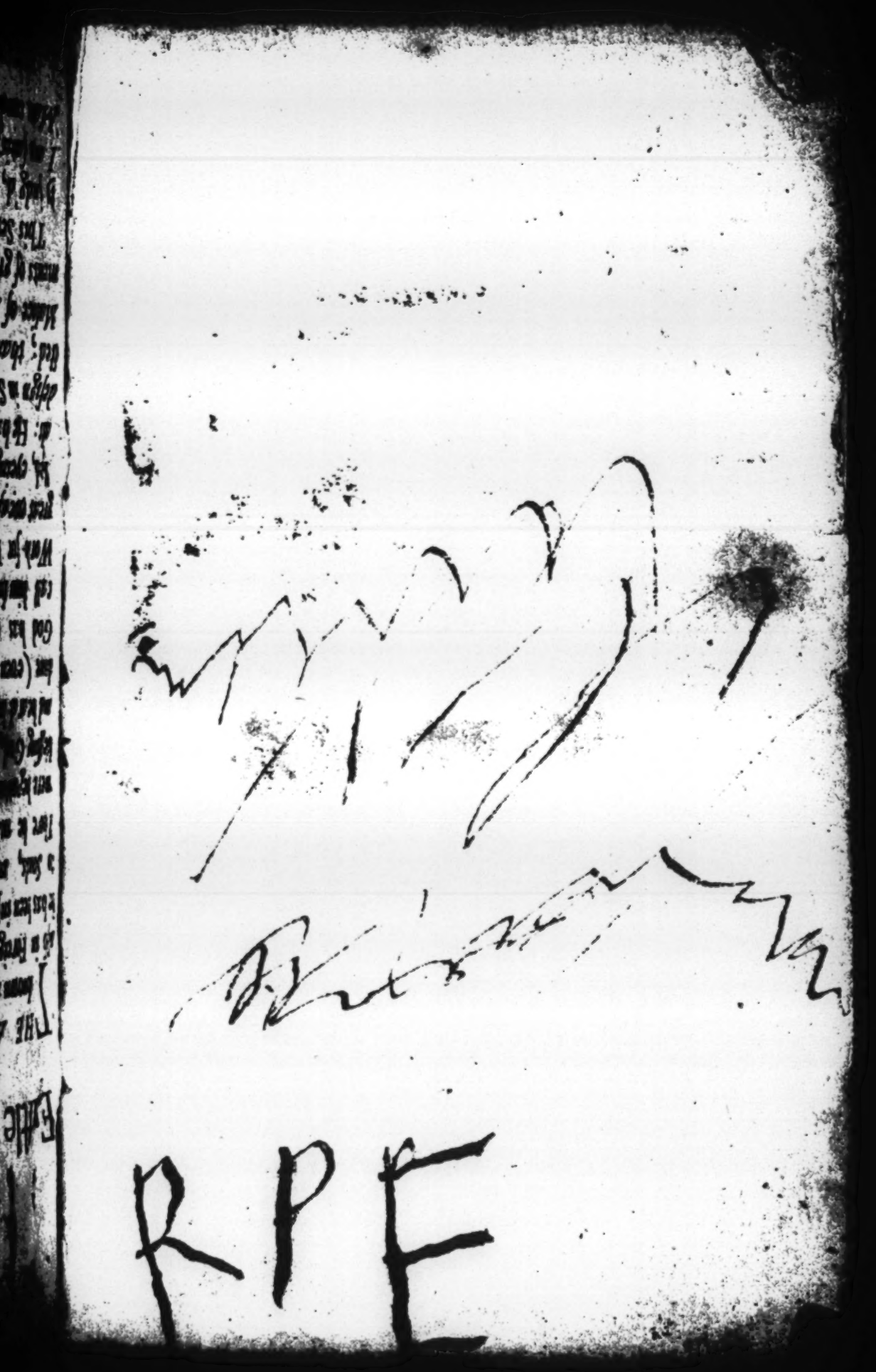

THE Epiſtle to the Reader.

THE *Author of theſe Sermons is well known in this City and Nation, as alſo in Forcign Countreys; in which Places he has been inſtrumental of doing much good to Souls, and planting ſeveral Churches. There be many can call him Father, who were begotten under his Miniſtery; and are bleſſing God, that ever they ſaw his Face, and heard his Voice: Great Work has been done (even in this City) by him; but now God has afflicted him, and we fear will call him home, he has had great and long Work for Patience, of which he hath had a great meaſure; he has been quiet under the Rod, eyeing the Hand of God in all his Trials: He has look'd more to Gods hand, and deſign in Suffering him ſo greatly to be afflicted; than at the Rage of Satan, and the Malice of Men, who have been the Inſtruments of great Part of his Trials.*

This Servant of God hath been ſufficiently judg'd, and condemn'd by many, though I am ſatisfied unjuſtly. But it is not whom Man condemns that is condemned, but ſuch

whom God condemns: Our dear Lord Jeſus tells us, Matth. 5. 9, 10. That bleſſed are they that ſuffer Perſecution for Righteouſneſs ſake, and have all manner of evil ſpoken againſt them falſly for his ſake: For their's is the Kingdom of Heaven. *It is no matter what we ſuffer here from Men, ſo it be falſly, and for Chriſts ſake; for the Kingdom and Crown of Heaven is weighty enough to make amends for all. The Croſs is the way to the Crown, for they that ſuffer with, and for Chriſt here, ſhall reign with him hereafter in Glory,* Rom. 8 17.

'Tis ſad to hear how he hath been reproached, though there are many know it is unjuſtly, and have cleared him; but none like to that Teſtimony which now on his Sick-bed, he declares, he has in his own Conſcience. Who can ſtand before Envy?

Reader, *I ſhall detain thee no longer from what follows, but deſire that God may bleſs it, and make it of great and good Uſe to thy Soul.*

I Subſcribe my Self, your Servant for Jeſus ſake.

Shadwel, October, 2. 1699.

N. Wyles.

A Diſcourſe of the Nature and Excellency of the Grace of Patience.

SERMON I.

JAMES I. iv.

But let Patience have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

THE *Jews*, for their Unbelief and great Sin, were expell'd their own Country and Scattered abroad on the Earth; and tho' God might have reveal'd the Goſpel unto ſome of each Tribe to the working Faith in them, yet theſe were not exempted from their Tribulations and Temptations: But God ſuffering theſe for their Benefit, the Apoſtle *James* writes this Epiſtle, for their

ſupport and direction; and begins, *ver.* 3. and excites them rather to rejoyce, than mourn, even when they fall into manifold troubles. *Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers Temptations*; not but Temptations are Afflictions: And Afflictions, for the preſent, are not joyous but grievous; but theſe tending to the production of the peaceable Fruits of Righteouſneſs as ordered by the Finger of Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs are grounds of Joy: So that turning our eyes from the preſent face and countenance of things, looking to the event and end of them, and the deſign of God herein, there is a ſtrong foundation of joy and comfort, unto the Chriſtian exercis'd herewith, *Rom.* 5. 3. ſo the Apoſtle here rendering his Reaſon for this Exhortation, ſaith *ver.* 3. *Knowing this, that the trial of your Faith worketh Patience.* You may rejoice under preſent Temptation with good reaſon; 1. Becauſe they prove and try your Graces; Faith in particular. 2. Faith being put into lively Exerciſe, produceth Patienec, which is a Grace ſettling and quieting the Heart, under trouble, and indeed, if this be attain'd under trouble, 'tis as good as preſent deliverance out of Trouble; for there is little difference 'twixt

theſe

theſe, Whether my Back be ſtrengthened to my Burden, or the Burden taken off from my Back; but the Back ſhould be throughly ſtrenthened. So here in my text. *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* Wherein you have two principal Parts; 1. The Exhortation, *But, Let,* &c. 2. The reaſon thereof, *That ye, may,* &c. Whence take this Obſervation.

Doct. *That every Believer ought to labour after the perfecting of the Grace of Patience.*

In ſpeaking to this Truth, I propoſe this Method, to ſhew you,

1. When Patience hath her perfect Work, *&c.*

2. Make the uſeful Application.

1. When hath Patience her perfect Work?

Sol. When the Heart of a Chriſtian quietly reſigning it ſelf up to God, doth couragiouſly bear up, hold on, and hold out, to the end of his Tryals and Afflictions, without Murmuring and Repining, *&c.* This Deſcription, hath di-

vers Parts, and I ſhall, God willing, ſpeak to each of them, and the perfect Work of Patience is,

1. The reſigning the Heart up to God. This ſuppoſes a Man to be a renewed Man; for Man in his unregenerate State is at enmity with God, and averſe to him, and while he remains in that ſtate, looking upon God as his Enemy, he will not intruſt him with his Wordly Concernment, much leſs with the diſpoſal of himſelf: For who will voluntarily yield up himſelf to his ſuppoſed Enemy, from whom he can expect no Smile, but Frowns; not Preſervation and ſafety, but Deſtruction and Ruin; 'tis inconſiſtent with Reaſon to expect good from the Hand of our Enemy; therefore the ground of a Man's Truſt and Confidence in God, is the apprehenſion of him, as reconciled to him in Chriſt, and his Friend; and not only ſo, but a Friend that hath given his Word and Promiſe to do him good: For tho' a Man be my Friend, yet if I have not his Word to protect me, I have not aſſurance of his Protection, tho' his Friendſhip be ſome ground of hope, it is not a ſure ground of Confidence, unleſs I have his Word; and if he be my Friend, and I have his Word; yet

yet he being a Creature, ſubject to Change, may, upon Secondary Conſideration, ſee cauſe to Change his Mind; or elſe, for want of Ability, and Power to help me; gives me juſt cauſe to doubt of, and ſuſpect Help from him; the Conſideration hereof, Strikes off the Hand from laying hold on ſuch a Helper in time of Diſtreſs. Now then, it is plain, that a Man muſt apprehend God to be his Friend, and one willing to protect him; yea one that hath promiſed to do him good, and is Faithful, Immutable, and able to ſave him to the uttermoſt; before I freely reſign my ſelf up to him, and his Conduct; and, indeed, this ſuppoſes a Man not only to have Grace, but a Conſiderable degree and meaſure thereof. For weak Chriſtians have Grace, tho' they are often full of Doubts and Wavering; and where there are theſe Staggerings and Doubtings; the Soul doth not fully truſt in, and ſettle himſelf upon Divine Conduct; ſo that a Man is a thriving Chriſtian, and growing up to the Stature of Chriſt, that hath attain'd to this, &c. And this brings me to the ſecond part of this Deſcription.

2. The quiet reſignation of the Heart.

A Perſon bewrays his averſneſs to God, that doth not freely and quietly yield to his Conduct, but is rather forc'd and conſtrain'd thereunto by ſome occurring Providences rather than his own Choice; this is like a Perſons yielding himſelf into the Hand of his Enemy, becauſe he is compell'd hereunto by the force of his Arms; this ſuppoſes a Man to be a Stranger to God, and unacquainted with him, being deſtitute of any true Work of Grace, and yet ſuch a one is yet under the Law, and in a legal Spirit; not voluntarily yielding to and calling upon God, but conſtrain'd ſo to do by Reaſon of his preſent Burdens; *Hoſ.* 5. 15. *In their Affliction, they will ſeek me early:* A Goſpel Principle enclines a Perſon to truſt in God, from a Love and Affection to him; and not to yield and cry to him from a Principle of legal and ſlaviſh Fear, as a Malefactor yields and cries to the Judge that pronounces Sentence of Death upon him; a Believer hath an intereſt in God through Chriſt, as a Child hath in his Father; and therefore reſigns up himſelf to God as to his compaſſionate Father, with a filial Obedience and Obſervance, and as one that is oblig'd by reaſon of the near Relation to protect him,

him, take care of him, and make provision for him; for the Parents are to lay up for, and provide for their Children; therefore he that cries and yields out of ſlaviſh Fear, doth it not out of Love to God, but from a regard to and Love of himſelf; but he that yields from a Goſpel Principle, doth it out of a filial Fear and Love; and ſo without diſorder, quietly reſigns himſelf, as apprehending God to have an unchangeable Love to him, &c. And this brings me to the next (*viz.*) the

Third Branch of this Deſcription, *viz.* Bearing up againſt the Billows of Oppoſition and Affliction. 'Tis no hard matter to be quiet and patient; when in Peace and without Trouble; for a Man to have a competent Satisfaction, while all things run ſmoothly, and according to his Hearts-deſire; while a Man ſits under his own Vine and Fig-tree, while the Cluſters hang thereon; to Sail delightfully in a Calm and ſmooth Sea, to be ſatisfy'd when he abounds with this Worlds good; and contented when none oppoſe him, and ſeek his hurt; to have a multitude of Potent Friends, and but a few impotent Adverſaries; for ſuch a one to be patient ar-

gues not that he hath Grace, but that he is in his Fools Paradiſe, ſettled upon the Lees of carnal Comforts, according to his ſenſual Wiſhes; but let God ſtrip him of theſe, his Heart, like *Nabals*, will Die within him, he hath loſt his Heaven, and drops down into his Hell. But when outward Peace is taken away from a Man, that he cannot turn himſelf to the right Hand or the left, but beholds himſelf encompaſſed with Trouble and black Clouds of darkneſs, when all things run aukardly and contrary to his carnal Expectations, and is fruſtrated and diſappointed in all his Attempts and Deſigns; for a Man then to bear up, argues him to be a gracious Perſon, aud one that hath reſign'd himſelf up to God and his Conduct, and when he hath his outward Comforts, Enjoyments, and neceſſary Supplies taken from him, and he is changed from a plentiful and proſperous to a poor and mean Condition and Eſtate in the World, and is conſtrain'd to be beholden to them, that have been as his Servants feeding at his Table; now to be quiet and not chang'd in his Temper, although his Condition be thus chang'd, argues Truth of Grace; yea, when a Mans former Friends are

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metamorphos'd into Adverſaries: Yea, intimate Friends into open Enemies, and them that he laid in his Boſom ſeek to tear out his Heart, and ruin him in his Name and Reputation in the World; and when he has given them no Provocation ſo to do, and he hath not a few, but a multitude of Enemies, and them Potent and Strong, having great Advantages to injure him, and but a very few weak and impotent Friends, that though they have a Will, yet have not Power and Ability to help and ſupport him; no not ſo much as Skill and Judgment to Counſel and Direct him in his Extremity: I ſay, for ſuch a one to endure all this quietly, without toſſing and flinging in his Spirit, argues him patient; and not only to have Truth of Grace, but Strength of Grace; ſurely he that bears up againſt all theſe Billows of Oppoſition, Trouble and Affliction, muſt be a growing Chriſtian, and one that hath Everlaſting Arms underneath to ſupport; for when Creature-Comforts are taken from him, he would ſink, had he no Refuge to fly unto in this his diſtreſſed Condition; ſuch one is like-minded with the Prophet, *Hab.* 3. 17. *Although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall*

Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no Meat, the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stalls, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation, &c. This leads me to the

Fourth Branch. Couragiouſly, bearing up. To bear up againſt the Billows of Affliction indeed argues Grace; but to bear up with Courage, and an undaunted Spirit argues a higher Degree of Grace; ſome Chriſtians make a ſhift juſt to hold up their Heads when encompaſſed about with many Troubles, this declares a meaſure of Faith; but when they are kept from fainting Fits under theſe Weights and Preſſures, this ſhews their Faith to be ſtrong. Men may move ſoftly with a heavy Burden on their Shoulders, but when they walk briskly with a mighty Burden, ſurely their Backs are ſtrong and their Spirits lively. To bear the Croſs of Chriſt, argues the Truth of Grace, but undauntedly to endure any Suffering for Chriſt, yea to rejoyce in Tribulation, declares a Man hath a high degree of Grace, that he hath not only Faith, but ſtrong Faith; he doth not only Love Chriſt, but greatly

greatly Loves Chriſt; he that doth me a Kindneſs is certainly Friendly, but he that joyfully does me good is the more hearty Friend; under great Afflictions to be found in our Duty, is a ſign of Sincerity; but chearfully to ſerve the Lord then, as in a Day of Proſperity, declares that the Service of God is our Delight; and to ſerve him with more Courage and Conſtancy of mind in the Hour of Temptation, ſhews that Adverſity ſuits us better than Proſperity: And if God may have more Glory by our Affliction, we ſhould take heed how we Pray for the removal of it; for 'tis hardly conſiſtent with Grace, to deſire our own eaſe more than Gods Glory, and he that bears up thus couragiouſly is ſatisfy'd God is glorify'd by his Afflictions, and his Heart made better: Hence it is, that he chearfully holds up, beſides he hath Apprehenſion of Gods ſpecial Preſence, and his ſupporting Grace, &c. This brings me to the next Thing,

Fifthly, The Work of Patience appears when a Chriſtian not only holds his own, but paſſes on in the Day of Trouble. Couragiouſly to bear up and keep our Ground, when a Troop of Temptations oppoſe us, declares us ſtrong

ſtrong Combatants for Chriſt; but to paſs on and ruſh through the Army of Temptations and Troubles, and to gain Ground and Advantage to our Souls thereby, argues us to be more than Combatants: Yea, not be ſway'd by them or overcome, but without receiving a foil, to preſs forward in our Faith and Obedience, argues us, *To be more than Conquerors, through Chriſt that loved us*, Rom. 8. 37. This ſhews not only that our Temptations are too weak for our Graces, but that our Graces are abundantly too ſtrong for them; and is a moſt clear Evidence of onr Intereſt in Chriſt: For ſmall Temptations at a glance, ſway and overcome a carnal Heart, yea, and ſometimes foil a weak Chriſtian, but when we meet powerful Temptations, and not only are not foil'd, but not ſtaggered, yea not ſtopt in our Courſe of Faith and Obedience; this declares us to be ſtrong Chriſtians, and endu'd with Patience, *&c.* But,

6. Holding out to the end of our Afflictions and Temptations; Patience hath not her perfect Work, altho we bear up, bear up couragiouſly, hold on for a Time, unleſs we hold out to the End; we gain not the Honour of Victory,

if

if we faint in the height of the Battel; neither ſhall we arrive at our Home, if we tire in the mid-way; the Honour of the former part of the Day is loſt, if we are vanquiſh'd in the after part. *He that endures to the end ſhall be ſaved*, Mat. 10. 22. When a Man is exceedingly provok'd, and urg'd to bear it, without Heart-riſings againſt his Enemies, argues his Patience for the preſent, but after higher Provocations, to fly out into Impatience and unſeemly Motions, Geſtures, and Words; ſhews Patience hath not her perfect Work in that Man. So tho' we endure the Chaſtenings of the Lord for a time; yet if after a long continuance of Stripes we become diſcontent, Patience hath not her perfect Work: But, as continuance in well doing, diſtinguiſhes us from Temporary Chriſtians; ſo continuing patient to the end of our Troubles, gives us a right to that Honourable Title of Patient Men, *&c.*

7. Without Murmuring or Repining. A patient Man is quiet and ſtill, and ſatisfied under the ſharpeſt Strokes that God lays upon him: As conſidering God doth no Unrighteouſneſs; neither ſuffereth the leaſt Trouble to befal his People; but therein he propoſeth his

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own Glory and their benefit, and this makes him quiet and ſtill under the Rod; a carnal Man only conſiders the Strokes, not the end of Gods ſtriking; and ſo Frets, and Fumes, and Blaſphemes, becauſe of his Pains. A Child through Ignorance repines and takes on grievouſly, when the Potion opperates, that was Adminiſtered, for the purging away the Corrupt Humors of the Body: Which a grown Perſon of ſenſe and Judgment indures it contentedly as conſidering the Benefit he may receive thereby in the End, tho' for the preſent 'tis not over pleaſing. Sanctified Reaſon, teaches not only to bear Afflictions, but quietly to bear them; to repine, ſhews the Diſſatisfaction of the Mind; and reproches God; at leaſt charging Him with Unkindneſs and want of Bowels; when indeed 'tis the Kindneſs and Love of God, that occaſions our Afflictions. *Iſa.* 27. 9. *By this ſhall the Iniquity of Jacob be purged. And this is all the Fruit to take away his Sin*; tho' the Sin of a Believer cannot plunge him into Hell; yet it procures to many, Chaſtenings here, and leſſens the weight of his Crown hereafter: And therefore God afflicts, to prevent a greater Affliction. His deſign

ſign in ſuffering preſent Troubles, is to take us from our preſent, and prevent future and worſer Sins and Sorrows. God ſees how bad we would be; and the Miſeries we ſhould plung our ſelves into, if he did not uſe this Method; and to repine and murmur at his Kindneſs and Goodneſs, ſhews the little Acquaintance we have with him, or Love to him; therefore, tho' we indure Affliction, Trouble, and Oppoſition; yet if we be, with an unwilling willingneſs, and with an uneaſineſs in our Spirits, we bring little or no Glory to God in our Adverſity; and as the weakneſs of our Grace is evident, ſo our Comfort is ſmall, or none at all; the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *Thy Rod and Thy Staff Comfort me; yea tho' I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me,* Pſal. 23. 4. When a Chriſtian conſiders that tho' he is involv'd in Trouble and Temptations, yet the Lord, in a way of Covenant Love and Mercy, is with him; this keeps up his Spirits from Swooning, and his Heart from murmuring: God hath promiſed, to be with his People in their Troubles, in their increaſing Troubles, Job 5. 19 *He ſhall deliver thee in ſix Troubles, yea in ſeven there ſhall*

no Evil touch thee. God delivers his People in their Troubles, he doth not ſay out of them (tho' that is a Truth,) but he ſupports us under them; his Eye is upon us in every Trouble, and his Hand ſtretched out, to hold us up, in ſix or ſeven: When one Trouble, falls on the back of another; and his Deſign is, that none of them ſhall do us any hurt. *There ſhall no evil touch thee.* There is no Sting, no Poiſon, no Curſe in the Afflictions of the Lords People: Tho' there is a preſent Pain, 'tis for thy preſent, and will produce a future Advantage: When this is ſeriouſly conſidered, *The poor hath Hope, and Iniquity ſtoppeth her Mouth*, Job 5.6. If the Corrections of the Lord, do his People no harm, yea on the contrary, are much for their Advantage, and do them much good; then murmuring and repining, under our Troubles, is a great Evil. But, *Behold, happy is the Man whom God Correcteth: therefore deſpiſe not thou the chaſting of the Almighty*, Job 5. 17. God manifeſting a Fatherly Love in theſe Corrections, for the reclaiming, and the recovery of his People, to make their Hearts better, and prevent their greater offences and ſharper Afflictions; ought therefore to be admired

mired and praiſed, for permitting Trouble to befal us, ſince his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Love, occaſioneth the Permiſſion thereof for the good of our Souls: Such therefore that repine and murmur, greatly offend him, and do themſelves no kindneſs thereby; when his chaſtenings are patiently and thankfully endured, and the Soul cries out, Bleſſed be the Lord, this is not Hell! This is far leſs than I deſerved; and many that have brought more glory to God, and ſerved him far better in their Generation, have paſſed under more grievous Sufferings, and ſorer Trials: I ſay, when theſe are taken kindly and endured patiently, the Lord uſually haſtens their Deliverance: His Heart melts as it were, at the quiet Sufferings of his People, and his Bowels earn towards them; that the Rod drops out of his hand, or he throws it into the Fire; and takes up and embraces his Children: But as a Father continues, chaſtiſing, and lays on ſharper ſtrokes when his Child is obſtinate, and refractory under his chaſtenings; till ſuch time as he takes it quietly, and humbles himſelf at his Feet: So the Lord keeps the Rod in his Hand, 'till he hath obtained his End in Correcting, and brought down the proud

proud Stomachs of his People; that they lie quiet and ſtill at his Foot, under the Strokes of his Hand: If when we bear the Yoke, we like a Heifer, unaccuſtom'd to it turn and twiſt our Neck, our pain is double thereby: So diſcontent and repining under Affliction, doubles that Affliction, diſcovers the Strength of corruption, and the abſence of Patience: Therefore Patience hath not her perfect Work, unleſs we hold out to the End, without murmuring, or repining, *&c.* Thus have I ſhew'd you when Patience hath her perfect Work, *&c.* Now,

Secondly, *I come to the Uſe of this,*

I. Uſe of Information. This ſhews us the excellency of a patient Chriſtian: Patience is a Glorious Ornament, and ſets off the Beauty and Luſtre of Chriſtianity.

1. A Patient Chriſtian, is a great Lover of God and Chriſt; had he not a good Opinion of God, he would not be quiet under the correcting Hand, of God; and in deed, 'tis becauſe he loves God, that he fears to offend him, by the appearanc of Evil, by a ſeeming Diſſatisfaction of his Providential Methods:

thods: For Diſcontent, and Impatience, bewrays a Man's Diſſatisfaction, and diſcovers his Pride; ſuch a one thinks that matters are not well and wiſely ordered by God; but if he had the management of them, they would be better carri'd on; while he that patiently ſubmits, ſanctifies the Name of God, magnifies his Wiſdom, and manifeſts the Faith and Strength of his love to God: The apprehenſion of the Truth and reality of the Love of God to him, cauſeth him patiently to reſign up himſelf to Divine Conduct. Who fears any damage to befal him, from the Hand of a Friend, that dearly loves him? *Love is ſtronger than Death*: many Waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it; the Billows and Waters of Affliction, cannot quench the flaming Affection of a Chriſtian to God; yea, his Love is rather augmented, than abated under his Troubles, becauſe he is aſſured the Lord will do him no hurt, but good by Afflicting him. Jer. 25. 6. *Provoke me not to Anger, &c. and I will do you no hurt.* 'Tis a provoking Evil, to diſlike God's proceedings, when he is about to do us good. The patient Man loveth God; and therefore likes whatſoever he doth. He that loveth a Man, makes

makes uſe of all Means and Opportunities to manifeſt it; but he that hath no Love, takes hold of any Advantage to quarrel with him, nothing is pleaſing, where there is no Love; therefore a Man chearfully bears up under his Afflictions, and holding out to the End, without murmuring, declares his Love to God; and ſuch a one, manifeſts great Love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: Seeing he not only writes after his Copy, *who was led as a Lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a Sheep before the ſhearer is dumb, ſo opened he not his mouth, he was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth*, Iſa. 53. 7. And hath learnt the art of Patience by his Example, who taught ſaying, Mat. 11. 29. *take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt unto your ſouls.* But alſo, becauſe he would not diſhonour Chriſt, nor his profeſſion of him by an unſeemly carrage, under the greateſt Afflictions: Leaſt he ſhould thereby diſcourage, any from looking after a Perſonal Intereſt in him. Beſides, he knows, unleſs a Man deny himſelf, and take up *his Croſs daily, he cannot be Chriſt's Diſciple.* And as he knows 'tis his greateſt Happineſs, to have the Teſtimony of his Conſcience, that he

he is a Follower of the Lamb, whereſoever he goes ; ſo he eſteems it a great Honour, that as his own Heart condemns him not, ſo others cannot juſtly charge him with an Un-Chriſtian like Spirit: Eſpecially, when he is beſet with ſtrong Temptations, and involv'd in great Troubles ; and 'tis the ſtrength of his Love, that makes him thus willing to have fellowſhip with Chriſt in his Sufferings. And truly herein, *Paul* hath declared manifeſtly, the Strength of his Love to Chriſt, when he not only *deſires to be found in him, not having his own righteouſneſs*, Phil. 3. 9, 10. but ſaith he, *that I may know him and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* An experienc'd Chriſtian is not eaſily cow'd by his Adverſaries, nor diſmay'd when great Troubles overtake him ; becauſe when he firſt ſet out, he had Information of theſe in the way to Heaven : *And that through much tribulation, we muſt enter into the kingdom of God*, Acts 14. 22. And Chriſt told him as much, *John* 16. 33. *In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation* ; he is therefore ſo far from being daunted when Trouble comes, that his Love to Chriſt is the more encreaſed, ſeeing he

is counted worthy to ſuffer, yea rejoices that he is honour'd with a Conformity to his great Lord and Maſter herein. *Peter* exhorts weak Chriſtians to courage and undauntedneſs, when ſuch like things befal them, and labours to prepare them againſt ſuch a Day of Thundering and Lightening, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12, 13, 14. *Beloved, think it not ſtrange concerning the fiery Tryal, which is to try you as though ſome ſtrange thing happened unto you. But rejoice in as much as ye are Partakers of Chriſts Sufferings; that when his Glory ſhall be revealed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding Joy. If ye be reproached for the Name of Chriſt, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God reſteth upon you:* On their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorify'd; *Ver.* 15. *But let none of you ſuffer as a Murderer or as a Thief, or as an Evil-doer or as a buſie Body in other Mens matters:* ver. 16, 17. *Yet if any Man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed but let him glorifie God, on this behalf. For the Time is come that Judgment muſt begin at the Houſe of God, and if it firſt begin at us, what ſhall the end be of them that obey not the Goſpel of God?* Thus a Chriſtian being fore-warn'd is fore

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arm'd, and these Tryals when they come, rather encrease than abate his Love to Christ, because they are Marks of his Favour, and not Tokens of his Wrath; *For whom he Loves he chastens*, &c. Certainly then a patient Resignation of the Heart to God in great Tribulations, argues a Man to be an experienc'd Christian, and a great Lover of God and Christ, *&c.*

2. Joy is a Fruit of the Spirit, and such Patience in a Christian, argues him to be furnished with this excellent Grace; else how is it, that when exercis'd with manifold Tribulations and Afflictions, his Countenance is not in the least altered? The Wise Man saith, *Prov.* 15. 13. *A merry Heart maketh a chearful Countenance*; and truly, when once a Mans Heart sinks, his Countenance retains not his former Lustre, but there are external Tokens in his Face, of the internal Sorrows of his Heart: Sudden Passions in the Mind, discover themselves presently in the Countenance, and then deep Afflictions and great Temptations must needs make some Alterations, unless prevented by some inward Joy; and this must Spring from some spiritual and invisible Cause; seeing he is without any

visible ground of Comfort, as Christ had, so such a one hath in another Sense food that others know not of; and this indeed is one great Reason of his great Patience in Affliction, for he is inwardly comforted, while he is outwardly troubled; while his fair-weather Friends refuse to Commune with him, he hath secret and sweet Communion with God, and this fills him with Joy; because greater is he that is in him, than he that is in the World, and all them that are incensed against him; a Man is not joyful in all his Enjoyments, while his Heart is press'd down with sorrow and heaviness; but if that be kept up, spirited and enlivened, and Sorrow and Fear banish'd there-from, he can encounter with the greatest Difficulties and can Sleep quietly, though upon the Points of Swords and Spears; and as to this Joy that is in the Soul of a Believer, none can understand it, or be sensible of it, but he that partakes thereof; they that have not the Holy Spirit indwelling, must needs be ignorant of the Joys of the Holy Ghost. Christ never lets his suffering People want a supporting Cordial, he will not suffer the Soul that he hath redeem'd to fail before him; and this Joy

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is the effect of the Comfort, that the Comforter which he hath ſent, brings into the Soul, and of the Love of God which he hath ſhed abroad in the Heart; Joy is the natural Production of this, for the Holy Spirit takes the things of Chriſt and ſhews them unto us; and certainly when ſuch infinite and unwordable Treaſures are diſcovered to the Spirit of a Chriſtian, he cannot but rejoyce; eſpecially it being reveal'd by the Spirit that he hath an unqueſtionable Right to all this. Hence the Apoſtle ſaith, *Now we have received not the Spirit which is of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the Things which are freely given us of God*; 1 Cor 2. 12. It may be, the World concludes the Chriſtian in a poor and miſerable Condition, for they meaſure a Mans happineſs by the fulneſs of Creature-Comforts; and know no better, therefore riſe no higher: Carnal Men are ignorant of the Things of God, theſe Things are ſpiritually diſcerned, which cannot be where there is no ſpiritual Sight: *The Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God*; who therefore takes up his Reſidence in the Hearts of Believers, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. That he may reveal theſe hidden Trea-

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ſures of Wiſdom to them, and their Title thereunto; then whatever carnal Worldlings think of the Condition of a Believer that is ſtript of all outward Mercies, yet his Spirit is fill'd with more, than if he was poſſeſs'd with Millions of Gold, becauſe he hath an infallible Intereſt in the God of all Grace and Mercy, and the Spirit of all Comfort; that what he outwardly wants is made up with ſpiritual Supplies, with the Manifeſtations of himſelf in Chriſt, by the Spirit. The Teſtimony of the Spirit, which bears Witneſs with his Spirit, *That he is the Child of God, and an Heir of Eternal Glory*, is that which fills him with Joy in the midſt of his Troubles: And though in appearance he hath but little in preſent Poſſeſſion, yet he hath a vaſt Inheritance in Reverſion; and tho' while he is under Age, and abroad in a World of Affliction: Yet conſidering his high Birth, and the large Eſtate that he ſhall for ever enjoy when he is of Age, of which already he hath an Earneſt; his Heart even leaps for Joy, and he values not preſent Oppoſition, but patiently endures Temptations, *&c.*

A Diſcourſe of the Nature and Excellency of the Grace of Patience.

SERMON II.

JAMES I. iv.

But let Patience have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

I Have ſhew'd you when Patience hath her perfect Work, and am enter'd upon the Uſe.

I. Of Information.

(1.) Such a one is a Lover of God and Chriſt.

(2.) He hath the Joy of the Spirit, &c. Now to Proceed.

3. He hath the Peace of God, *Phil.* 4. 17. *The Peace of God which paſſeth all*

Underſtanding, ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Chriſt Jeſus. Hence through the Apprehenſion of a Man's Peace with God, his Heart is kept from Repining, and his Mind and Spirit quiet and ſtill: Chriſtian Patience ſprings from the Knowledge of his Reconciliation to God through Chriſt: An awakened Sinner could have no Satisfaction, If he ſtill look'd upon God as his Enemy and unreconciled, but would remain diſquieted and reſtleſs in the midſt of abundance of outward Enjoyments; but when with an Eye of Faith he looks on God, as reconciled by the Blood of the Croſs, and now his Friend and on his ſide, he eaſily encounters with the greateſt Difficulties and Oppoſitions in the World, and values not the Power and Policy of his worſt Enemies, reaſoning as *Paul*, Rom. 8. 31. *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?* If he be on our ſide, who hath Power enough to ruine all our Enemies only with a look of Indignation; what Cauſe have we to be afraid of the ſtrength and number of them that are againſt us? *If we are of God*, 1 John 4. 4. *Then greater is he, that is in us, then he that is in the World.* He that is our Friend, can not but Pity us when in Diſtreſs, and if God be for us,

us, and our Friend, he wants not Bowels to Pity us, nor Love to help us; and though he doth not presently deliver us, yet affords present Strength to uphold us; and he that is Omniscient cannot but see and observe what our Adversaries are about to do; yea what they are acting and designing to act against us: He that is the searcher of the Hearts and tryer of the Reins, is well acquainted with the Thoughts and Counsels of their Hearts, and he being Wisdom it self wants not Skill to Counter-work them in all their evil Purposes: He that hath given his Word, and is Truth it self cannot fail us, who hath promised not to leave us, nor forsake us: He will not break his Word, to gratifie the Devil and his Peoples Enemies; neither can he, *for faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it*; God can as soon cease to be, as cease to be faithful: Now I say, the Consideration of this, that God is at Peace with a Person, through the Blood of the Cross is a strong ground of Patience: This shews that a patient Christian, is one that hath not only Faith in the Habit, but also in Exercise; that he acts Faith in God through Christ, believing he is reconciled and at Peace with God: And

this occaſioneth that quiet and peaceable frame that is ſeen in him, *&c.*

4. A patient Chriſtian is one well freight with Grace; he is a Man of a precious and ſingular Temper, long-ſuffering, gentle and meek, yea abounding in gentleneſs and meekneſs. Anger and raſhneſs bewrays a Mans weakneſs, and are the contraries to gentleneſs and meekneſs, but Patience under the Rod, declares the gentleneſs and meekneſs of the Perſon exercis'd therewith: And the Grace of long-ſuffering when he continues quiet under great and continued Afflictions and Provocations from his Enemies, ſuch a one hath learnt of Chriſt to be meek and humble or lowly-minded: He conſiders, the Wiſdom and Sovereignty of God is concerned in every Providence, all things that God does are well done, becauſe wiſely done, according to the Counſel of his own Will; and therefore 'tis highly reaſonable that he ſhould ſubmit and be at quiet, for the Lord wiſely orders every Providence; therefore (1.) A patient Chriſtian gives a careful Attention unto the Voice of the Rod, for there is a Voice from God in every Affliction. Affliction riſeth not out of the Duſt. God hath afore appoin-

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ted and measured out the Afflictions and Trials of his People; and the Man of Patience and Wisdom considers this, *In the World ye shall have Tribulation.* It must be so, for God has ordain'd it shall be so, for gracious and wise Ends; *Micah 6. 9. The Lords Voice crieth unto the City, and the Man of Wisdom shall see thy Name, hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it.* Such a one meekly and patiently endures the chastenings of the Rod, because it is in such a Hand that can design no evil against a Believer; but God seeks his own Glory and his Peoples good, in every stroke of his Hand: And therefore he attends to, and hearkens out the Voice of God in it, he knows he deserves this and more, and when the Hand of God is upon him, it stirs up the Spirit of Prayer; and he goes to God saying, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me*; he desires to know his Sin, that he may be humbled for it, and take heed to avoid it for the Future; though his Enemies curse him and cast Dirt in his Face, he does not presently fly in their Faces, but considers the Hand of God in it. When *Shimei* railed at, reproached and cursed *David*, *Abishi* would have gone over and cut off

that dead Dogs Head, as he worded it: But ſays *David*, *Let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him curſe David*, 2 Sam. 16. 10. The main thing that a Believer Eyes in every Affliction is the Hand of God: *They that ſeek after my Life, lay ſnares for me: And they that ſeek my hurt ſpeak miſchievous things, and imagine deceit all the Day long, but I as a Deaf Man heard not; and I was as a Dumb Man that openeth not his Mouth*, Pſalm 38. 12, 13. But why was *David* ſo quiet; ſee *ver.* 15. *For in Thee do I hope*, &c. Thou haſt gracious Ends in permitting all this, 'tis to humble me no doubt for my Sins, and was this effected in and upon him? See *ver.* 18. *For I will declare mine Iniquity; I will be ſorry for my Sins:* Yet he could not but think of the Strength and Malice of his Adverſaries, *ver.* 19. *But mine Enemies are lively, and they are ſtrong: And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied, they alſo that render evil for good are my Adverſaries*, &c. Yet the Believer is patient and dare not open his Mouth by way of Murmuring; why? becauſe the Lord hath a Hand in it, *&c.* Thus he attends to the Voice of the Rod. (2.) Such a one opens his Heart to receive what God ſpeaks to him by the Rod,

Rod; 'tis true, 'tis the Work of God to open the Heart; but you muſt know, that God Works upon Men, as upon rational Creatures, and he makes them to be active in opening their Hearts; when the Soul has found out the end and gracious Deſign of God in afflicting, his Heart then yields and willingly ſubmits: He doth as it were ſtrip himſelf, lie down at the Foot of God, and gives him a fair ſtroke, *&c.* He is ſo far from repining at the Rod, that he thankfully receives theſe fatherly Corrections, *&c.* Hereby is diſcovered his meekneſs and humility; and this caſts a great luſtre and beauty upon his Profeſſion, *&c.*

5. A Patient Chriſtian is ſtrong in Faith. *Abraham* could not ſo patiently yield to God in Sacrificing his only Son *Iſaac*, had he not been Strong in Faith. He believed, altho he had no ſenſible ground of Hope; he doubted not, but that God would be as good as his Word, tho' he conſulted not with Fleſh and Bloud, but conſidered Him, who commanded him to offer up his Son, his Power and Faithfulneſs; he thought it unbecoming him to reaſon with God about the Righteouſneſs and Equity of his Precept: It ſufficed him, that it was

Juſtice and Truth it ſelf, that requir'd this of him; and his Commands are not to be diſputed, ſeeing 'tis not poſſible for God to countenance any unrighteous and unjuſt Action. So the patient Chriſtian, 'tho God brings him into the deep Waters of Afflictions remembers the Promiſe of God, Iſa. 43. 2. *When thou paſſeſt through the Waters I will be with thee, and through the Rivers they ſhall not over flow thee*, &c. Such a one hath right notions of God, that he is a God of Truth; and tho' he paſſes through the Waters of Affliction, yet, God having given him his Word to be with him in a a ſpecial manner, in ſuch a Condition he briskly wades through and preſſeth forward; he had rather be in Adverſity, with the Promiſe of the Divine Preſence, than in Proſperity without it, for he ſeeketh God, not himſelf; his Glory, not his own carnal eaſe, *&c.* Such a one, like a Child, is willing to venture any where with its Mother, or Nurſe, but dare not venture in a dark place without them: If the Mother ſays I will go with thee, give me thy Hand, Child, thou ſhalt come to no hurt, then the Child goes contentedly. So a Patient Chriſtian, having Gods Promiſe

miſe to be with him, is content to wade through deep Afflictions, eſpecially becauſe he hath his Word, *Rivers of Troubles ſhall not overflow him*, had he not Faith in the Promiſe, he would not with Patience, endure Tribulation. There is nothing grieves and troubles the Spirit of a Chriſtian ſo much as his Sin; this being his greateſt burden, he would gladly be rid of it, and underſtanding that Affliction is that by which his *Iniquity ſhall be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his Sin*, Iſa. 27. 9. That which diſhonours God, Wounds and Troubles his own Conſcience. Ceartainly he would patiently endure a Cut tho' ſomewhat deep, for the leting out the Corruption and taking away the Core, than that it ſhould further infect his Soul, and continually Knaw his Conſcience. Our Journying to Heaven, cannot be over-pleaſant while Sin lies as a heavy burden on our Souls. Tho' God be reconciled to the Sinner by the Blood of the Croſs; yet to walk in the Dark without the Manifeſtations of this Reconciliation is diſmal. As tho' a Child in Raggs, may be rightful Heir to a vaſt Inheritance, and ſhall certainly hereafter taſte the ſweetneſs of it, yet being

being Ignorant hereof, at preſent he looks upon himſelf no better than a Beggar, and in a poor and miſerable Condition. Nothing can hinder us from ſweet Communion with God in his Ordinances but Sin; nothing can take our Hearts off from Spiritual Dutys but Sin; either we muſt leave off ſinning, or ſinning will make us leave off Praying: Therefore God by Affliction hedges up our way of ſinning, that ſo we may glorifie Him, and He Comfort us, that we may be brought to humble our ſelves at his Feet, confeſs and forſake our Sins, and that he may Hand forth his Pardoning Graces, and manifeſt his Love to us thereby; that He may ſay, *Be of good cheer, your Sins are forgiven you.* And that we may be in a poſture to receive his gracious Smiles, the ſhinings of his Face and ſweet communion with him. And it being reveal'd to the Soul, that theſe are the gracious ends which God propoſeth, in Afflicting his own Children; Acting Faith in the Truth hereof, he not only patiently, but moſt heartily wades through the Waters, that are of ſo great Uſe and advantage. Beſides this, he believeth that Word in *Habb.* 1. 13. where the Prophet ſaith, ſpeaking of God, *Thou art*

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of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on Iniquity, &c. If God did not ſhew himſelf diſpleaſed at Sin, where ever it is, how would his Purity and Holineſs be manifeſted? tho' He be reconciled to the Perſons of his People, He cannot be reconciled to their Sins; for he cannot approve of that which is contrary to his own divinely Holy Nature; God would ſeem to countenance Sin in his People, if he uſed no method with them to ſhew his diſlike; and what better and likelier means could he uſe than by Correction, to let them know their Faults and thereby diſcover his Purity, that he cannot look on Iniquity with any approbation? would he to manifeſt his Indignation againſt the Sins of his Elect, puniſh his own ſinleſs Son, (who had Sin only ſticking to him by Imputation) yea, Puniſh him with Hell Torment; and yet tie up his own Hands, from Chaſtiſing them whoſe Sin ocaſioned His Sons Sufferings? Tho' Chriſt hath took out of the Hand of God, the Sword of his vindictive Juſtice, that he may not puniſh the Elect with Hell Torments, he hath not took from him his Rod, that he may not Correct them as their Father: God hath more kindneſs for his People,

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than to ſpoil them, by ſuffering them to grow Headſtrong; which they would be apt to do, did he not ſometime chaſtiſe them. It may be ſaid of the beſt of God's Children as *Solomon* ſpeak, *Pro.*. 22. 15. *Fooliſhneſs is bound in the Heart of a Child, but the rod of correction ſhall drive it far from him.* Now the Patient Chriſtian, believes that God takes this courſe to ſhew him his Folly and make him Wiſe; and therefore repines not at the Rod, *&c.*

6. A Patient Chriſtian, is a moderate and temperate Chriſtian: Was he not moderate and of an even temper, how could he paſs through various changes in his condition in the World, and not be put out of Humour? his deſires and Affections are not immoderately ſet upon the World and the things thereof; were it ſo, he would be reſtleſs and diſſatisfy'd, 'till he attain'd his carnal Wiſhes and Deſires, and he could not be quiet without them. Therfore for a Man to be fallen from a plentiful Eſtate, to a low Condition, from a ſtate of bodily Health and outward Tranquility, to a condition of Sickneſs and Miſery, and yet to keep in an even temper of Mind, declares him to be a moderate Man: To loſe outward

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Enjoyments and yet remain quiet and ſatisfy'd, ſhews that not thoſe carnal Enjoyments, but God in them, was the Baſis of his Comfort: And ſo tho' he hath loſt his Enjoyments, yet not having yet loſt his God, he is as quiet and Patient as before: Tho' ſuch a one may deſire this, that and the other worldly Good; yet not ſo much to ſatisfie his ſenſual Appetite, as that God may be Glorifi'd thereby: But if God ſees fit to deprive him of theſe, or not to Anſwer his Deſires, he is Content, why? Becauſe he peceives it makes more for God's glory that he be without them: Seeing his Wiſe Providence hath ſo ordered matters; he is willing that God ſhould have the ordering of his Affairs; who is Wiſdom and Goodneſs it ſelf, and knows what is beſt for him, and wherein he may Glorifie himſelf. An immoderate Deſire after any thing we have not in Poſſeſſion, declares us diſſatisfied with our preſent Condition, and diſcontented with God's allowance, and therefore bewrays the weakneſs of Grace and ſtrength of corruption, and to run after that which God intends for us in his time. To ride Poſt before God's Providence in Deſire; Speaks aloud

aloud our impatience, and the unquietneſs of our minds; it declares we take not matters kindly at God's hands, when we are in haſte to be delivered out of our Troubles when He ſeems not to be willing; it is ſinful, when it is ſo, tho' Men perceive it not, but more ſinful, when it is apparent to them that converſe with us: Becauſe it is a bad Copy for weak Chriſtians to Write by, and no Encouragement to thoſe that are entering upon a cloſure with Chriſt. And as God is hereby diſhonoured, weak Chrſtians ſtaggered, convinced Sinners diſcouraged. So prophane Perſons take an Advantage hereby to ridicule Religion: Seeing we diſcover our ſelves to be like them in our Immoderation: And it is no ways for our own Credit and Reputation, Phil. 4. 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men: The Lord is at hand.* We are not to deceive, or play the Hypocrite, by appearing to be what we are not; and therefore not to make ſhew of that which we have not. But yet, if we are Men of Moderation it will be for God's Glory, that it appears ſo to all Men. And our Sin of Immoderation, would be aggravated and heightened; if it appear

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even then when God is at Hand to help us, and coming to anſwer and deliver us, *The Lord is at Hand.* And as Moderation, ſo Temperance ſhines in a patient Chriſtian; for when our Commons are cut ſhort, and to have hardly enough to keep Life and Soul together (as we ſay) yet to be ſatisfy'd, argues we have no ſmall degree of Patience; or to have abundance, and yet to be temperate. For Perſons that had their Cellars full of Wine, their Tables ſet with choice Varieties, to be brought to a Morſel of Bread, and a Draft of Water, and yet quiet and patient, argues their Moderation, and Temperance; that they were not Belly-gods, and did not dote on what they had, and that their Happineſs did not Centre in thoſe things; and for Perſons to have Plenty of that which naturally they Love and Delight in, and yet to reduce their Appetite to a low Ebb in the deſire and uſe of theſe, argues that the Heart is not ſet upon theſe things; for a Poor Man to be ſatisfy'd with his Condition, and a Rich Man willing to be reduc'd to Poverty, and that God ſhould take the greateſt Part of what he hath for his Glory, argues not only a Man to be temperate, but that his Heart

Heart Centres in God and not the Creature: If a Man is willing to part with that which God is taking away, though it ſuits his carnal Appetite: It declares ſuch a one to be much wean'd from the Love of the World. *The Lord gives, and the Lord takes* (ſays *Job*) *Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord*, Job 1. 21, *&c.*

II. *Uſe of Exhortation*, To labour after Patience in Affliction, and in every Condition to be ſatisfied. Be much in the Contemplation of the Attributes of God, which are all laid in Covenant, for the Uſe and Encouragement of the Lord's People; let me ſpeak of ſome of them.

1. *The Power, Alſufficiency, and Almightineſs of God.* Indeed, when a Man is in Diſtreſs, and beſet with a ſtrong Adverſary, having no Friend with him to help him, he cannot but be ſurprized with Fear in ſo great a Danger, and helpleſs; and if he had ſome Friend with him that was unable to defend himſelf or aſſiſt him, his Caſe would be no better: But at ſuch a Time to have in Company a Friend of conſiderable Strength and Courage, this bears up his Spirits and keeps his Heart from fainting; even ſo

ſo Chriſtians when you meet with Oppoſition from powerful Enemies, if you conſider your own Strength, and the weakneſs and inſufficiency of your carnal Friends and Relations; you would be diſcouraged: But if you conſider that the Lord is with you, and on your ſide; who is a God of Power and Might, you ſhall not be diſmay'd; the Conſideration of this, made *Paul* to break forth in theſe Words: *If God be for us, who can be againſt us*, Rom. 8. 31. If he who with the breath of his Noſtrils, can ſcatter Millions of Giants, and drive them away as Chaff before a ſtrong Wind, *be for us, who can be againſt us?* if he be for us, lies it not in his Power to diſpirit all our Adverſaries, and make them as weak as Water? Cannot he ſoon change their Minds, and turn their Hearts as the Rivers of Waters are turned; that of Enemies they may become Friends? Is he not able to confound them, and make them aſhamed of all their Impieties and Slanders? Cannot his Voice ſoon effect his Pleaſure? *Iſa.* 65. 13. *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord God, my Servants ſhall eat, but ye ſhall be hungry; behold my Servants ſhall drink, but ye ſhall be thirſty; behold my Servants ſhall rejoyce, but ye ſhall be aſhamed,*

aſhamed, ver. 14. *Behold my Servants ſhall ſing for Joy of Heart, but ye ſhall cry for ſorrow of Heart, and ſhall howl for vexation of Spirit*, ver. 15. *And ye ſhall leave your Name for a Curſe unto my choſen.* Is it not ſinful to fear the Strength and number of our Enemies, when the Almighty hath declared himſelf for us? Doth not God expreſs himſelf thus unto his People, *Ezek.* 36. 9. *For behold I am for you, and I will turn unto you*, &c. If we ſhould then be diſcouraged, it muſt be becauſe we queſtion God's Power or Faithfulneſs, or both, and is not this ſinful? And Beloved, whatever our Troubles or Afflictions are, though never ſo great, though never ſo many; the Conſideration of Gods Alſufficiency would be a means to quiet our Spirits under all of them; ſeeing this is laid in Covenant for us, is not he an Almighty God? And doth he not ſay, *I will be your God*, Ezek. 36. 28. And hath ſuch a God promiſed, and cannot he, nor will he not perform it? If you ſay he cannot help you, you reproach his Power; if you ſay he will not, you charge him with unfaithfulneſs. If Almightineſs, Alſufficiency, cannot ſupport you, cannot deliver you, you may eternally Diſpair:

Who

Who among you hath a tender Love for your Children, and Power enough to help them, when in Diſtreſs you would refuſe to aſſiſt them? If a Child is Sick, Poor, or encompaſſed with mercileſs Enemies; and it lies in the Power of a Father to cure him, to relieve him, to defend him, and doth not do it, doth not this declare him to be unnatural and to want Bowels to his own Child? And will an Alſufficient God think ye, ſuffer himſelf to be reproach'd for want of exerting his Power for his Peoples good in their Diſtreſs, *&c.* Learn you to improve the Power and Alſufficiency of God (which is laid up in Covenant for you) in your Afflictions, and this will be a means to quiet and ſatisfie your Spirits, *&c.*

2. *The faithfulneſs and unchangeablneſs of God.* I touch'd upon this in the laſt Head. Indeed, when in Affliction and oppoſed by a multitude of Potent Adverto, to have ſome fair-weather Friends, ſuch that have Power, but not Will, to help and relieve us, is but a rotten ſtay in our Diſtreſs; to apply our ſelves to ſuch for their Aſſiſtance; and find them cold to our requeſts and deaf to our crys; nay, to ſlight and contemn us, in-

inſtead of encouraging us, is not the way to raiſe our hope but augment our Grief: And truly this is very ordinary and frequent, even among Profeſſors in this dark Day: While Proſperity ſmiles on us, they ſmile: But when we fall into Adverſity, we ſoon ſee their Countenances altered and behold their Fowns. Nothing is more natural to Men, than to be lovers of themſelves; and ſelf admirers Smile on none, without propoſing ſome outward Advantage to themſelves: And while a Man hath many Friends, thrives and Proſpers, he ſhall not want the Countenance and Complement of ſuch Perſons: Becauſe he is in a Capacity, ſome how, or other, to do them a kindneſs at a dead Lift: But when once they perceive him to go down the Hill and fall into deep Adverſity; they all diſappear and are not ſeen; leaſt they themſelves ſhould be petitioned for Relief. The change of our Condition, ſoon alters the Countenance of fickle fair-Weather Friends; who reaverenced our Wealth, not our Perſons. The Wiſe Man is much in the right on't, Pro. 19. 4, 7. *Wealth maketh many Friends; but the Poor is ſeparated from his Neighbour, Every Man is a Friend to him that*

that giveth Gifts, All the Brethren of the Poor do hate him: How much more do his Friends go far from him: He perſueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him. This is no new thing: But to find ſuch dealings among the religious is a great ſcandal to Religion. But when it falleth thus out, the true Chriſtian hath no Ground to be diſcouraged, ſeeing the powerful Almighty, Alſufficient God, hath promiſed to be his Friend yea, his God, to help ſtrengthen and uphold him. *And all that are incenced againſt him ſhall be aſhamed and Confounded, that they ſhall be as nothing, and they that ſtrive with him ſhall periſh,* ſee *Iſa.* 41. 10, 11. And when once God hath given his Hand, his Word of Promiſe to ſtand by his People, they have a ſure ground of Truſt; for he is oblig'd to keep his Word: He can as ſoon Ceaſe to be, as ceaſe to be a God of Truth and Faithfulneſs. It deſtroys the Credit and Reputation of a reputed honeſt Man; to falſifie his Word, when it lys in his Power to fulfil it. God hath promiſed nothing but what he is able to perform; and if he doth not fulfil his Promiſe, He muſt needs be unfaithful, but this cannot be. He cannot I ſay, neither will

He by breaking his Word, give an Advantage to the Devils, nor any of his Enemies, to charge him with a Lye. St. *Paul* makes the Faithfulneſs of God, the encouraging Reaſon, of his Hope of his Future Eternal Happineſs. *Titus*, 1. 2. *In hope of Eternal Life, which God that cannot Lye, promiſed before the World began.* This is a ſtrong ground of Conſolation to the Afflicted Believer; that God hath promiſed him ſuccor of Relief: and that he will not, yea he cannot break his Word, *Heb.* 10. 23. *For he is faithful that promiſed.* This is given as a ground of Encouragement to the *Hebrews*, to hold faſt the profeſſion of their Faith without wavering. Nothing ſhould ſtagger our Faith and confidence in God, who is faithful to his word of Promiſe and cannot Lye. The conſideration of this, was that which quickened and enlivened the ancient Chriſtians, in the midſt of their Troubles and among falſe Brethren; yea, that which bore up the Spirit of the greateſt Apoſtles, 2. *Theſ.* 3. 1, 2, 3. *Finally Brethren, Pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified even as it is with you, And that we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked Men: For all Men have*

have not Faith. But the Lord is faithful, who ſhall ſtabliſh you, and keep you from evil, In all our Straits and Troubles, we ſhould have recourſe to the Promiſes and reſt upon the faithfulneſs of God therein. And Beloved, as the faithfulneſs, ſo the unchangeableneſs of God is ground of Encouragement to us in all our Tribulations: Tho' Friends alter their Reſpects to us, as our Conditions alters and changes. Yet, God in his Love remains ſtill the ſame to us. He loved us not at firſt for what we had, or for any Exellency he ſaw in us. The outward beauty and pomp of worldly Glory and VVealth, doth not in the leaſt attract his Eye: He is the Donor of all outward Good things; and an Eternal Happineſs and Felicity to himſelf. The Argument of his Loving us, being drawn from himſelf, and not from us, or our condition, our changeableneſs, or the Mutation of our State can make no change in his Love; He himſelf being unchangeable in his Nature. The Foundation of his Love to his People, is therefore an immutable and unchangeable Ground. And if the Ground and Argument of his Love remains, his Love to us neceſſarily muſt continue, and is

if his Love continues to us the ſame in all Mutations of Providence. We have no reaſon of impatience or diſquietment, whatever our Condition in the VVorld be, If he that ſits at the Helm of Affairs, ordering all things in Heaven and Earth, according to the Counſel of his own VVill, be our Powerful, Faithful and unchangeable Friend. Then may we aſſure our ſelves that all things will go well with us, and turn to our Advantage; (altho at preſent we do not perceive it, but thing run croſs to our carnal deſires.) For how can any thing hurt us? Seeing he wants not Power to prevent it, and hath promiſed ſo to do? and how can we fear a diſappointment, ſeeing he is *faithful that hath promiſed, who alſo will do it.* And what tho' we are fallen into a State of Adverſity, Trouble and Diſtreſs; his Mind being not changed, nor his Love in the leaſt abated; his Bowels will not ſuffer any thing to harm us. We have no ground to think he is altered in his Affections; becauſe he hath chang'd our Conditions, and we are now under the ſtrokes of his Rod; but 'tis rather a Corroborating Inſtance of his Love, *for whom he loves he chaſtens.* A Parent's whipping of his Child

Child, argues not his hatred of him, but his Love, Care and tenderneſs; to reclaim him from thoſe Enormities that might otherwiſe inevitably iſſue in his Ruin: Tho' he adminiſters a bitter Potion to his Child, and Conſtrains him to take it, for the removal of ill Humours contracted in his Stomack, *&c.* This argues no alteration or abatement of his Love; ſeeing thereby he deſigns his Health and Advantage, *&c.* If God take from us ſuch things, by which we have done harm to our ſelves, either this or the other carnal Enjoyment; and now hedges up our way, that we cannot come near them; this argues not any change in him or his Love: No more than it ſhews a want of Love in a tender Mother, when ſhe takes away and hides, out of the ſight of her Child, that Knife wherewith he had cut his Finger. Beloved, tho' your Condition be changed, yet for your Comfort, and that you may not be diſquieted; God ſaith, Mall. 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not*, &c.

3. *The Holineſs of God.* I have touch'd this already, and therefore ſhall ſpeak the leſs at this time: We are to conſider, that God's providential way, to declare

the Purity and Holineſs of his Nature; is not meerly by the Light ſet up in Mens Conſciences, but by his outward dealings with the Children of Men; that the glorious Luſtre of this Attribute may ſhine through out all his Works: This is manifeſted inwardly to Mens Conſciences, and by his Word and Spirit, and outwardly by his Acts of Providence: And this of Holineſs, is indeed the Glory of all his other Attributes; it puts a Luſtre upon them as well as upon all his Works: Holineſs was that Image and likeneſs which we had of God in our firſt Creation. From a view of this, together with that happy Communion Man had with God, ſprung Satan's malice, who being miſerable himſelf, highly diſdain'd and envi'd Man's happineſs; and if Man's happineſs at firſt, conſiſted iu this, the loſs of Holineſs, was neceſſarily the loſs of his Happineſs. And this Satan well underſtood, elſe had he not tempted him to Sin, in taking of the forbidden Fruit: For by Sin he was depriv'd thereof, and became unmeet for Communion with a Holy God, which was the Heaven of Man's Happineſs. For God being the only Good and chief End of

of Man: The loſs of our primitive Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, ſeparated us from that only good, who could not look pleaſently upon us and lay us in his Boſom as before, we being by our Sin and diſobedience, become unclean and polluted. God therefore to make us ſenſible of our unhappineſs, by reaſon of Sin and his diſpleaſure thereat, (as well as to declare his Truth and Juſtice,) ſo ſoon as he had embrac'd a Fools Paradice and Sin'd, turn'd him out of his real Paradice, and hid his Face from him: For Holineſs being his Nature and Himſelf, he could do no otherwiſe, unleſs he ſeem'd to walk contrary to himſelf; and not only ſo, but give Man juſt ground, to ſuſpect his Purity and to charge Him with Falſhood, in breaking his Word, had he not ſhew'd himſelf offended with Sin. And truly as God did not upon Man's firſt Sin, walk contrary to himſelf and ſeem to countenance it, So neither doth he, nor can he by any means indulge Men in their Sins, no not his own choſen People; for tho' (as I have ſaid) he be reconcil'd ſo far to their Perſons, by the Death of Chriſt, as not to puniſh them with endleſs wrath as a ſevere Judge, yet neither

is

is he, nor can he be reconcil'd to their Sins, unleſs he fall out with himſelf, and act contrary to his Nature, which is utterly Impoſſible. And tho' after the Fall, *Adam* had the Promiſe of the Seed, Chriſt, and acted Faith in the Promiſe; and was Perſonaly Juſtifi'd and receiv'd to God, yet, this hindred not, but he muſt taſte the fruit of his Sin, *Get his Bread, by the ſweat of his brow*; and at length return to Duſt, and why ſo! but becauſe God would have a continual Senſe of his Sin to remain in him, ſo long as liv'd: that God might make his hatred thereto apparent; and enhaunce the Price of his Holineſs. And is it not therefore highly reaſonable that Men ſhould patiently and quietly ſubmit to his Rod, whereby God makes a diſcovery of the Purity of his Nature, and his averſneſs to Sin? and that to this very End, that through Chriſt Men might be ſeparated from their Sin, and recover their primitive Happineſs of Communion with God: *For without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. &c.

4. *And Laſtly. God's Omniſciency.* The ſerious conſideration of this Attribute; that God's Eye is like a flame of Fire

Fire, that penetrates through the cloſeſt Crevis and Cavern, that he beholds all Things and Perſons with one look and at all times, Would certainly much tend to the quieting and ſettling of the Soul under the heavieſt Preſſures and in the deepeſt Afflictions. Heb. 4. 13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight, for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him, with whom we have to do.* Therefore as he beholds our Enemies, and obſerves all their motions, with a deſign to counterwork them; or takes a ſtrict obſervation in order to meaſure out their Puniſhment, according to the degree and demerit of their Sin. So his Eye is upon us, narrowly watching our motions whether we have any Heart-burnings and Heart-riſings againſt them; and are not ready to uſurp the Throne of God, and take upon us to be Judges in our own Cauſe, and Executioners of our Adverſaries. *For vengeance is mine ſaith the Lord, and I will repay it*, Rom. 12. 19. It is dangerous to ſeem, as tho' we would take the work out of God's hand; whoſe Glory is as much concerned, as our Peace and Profit: we are to conſider that he is not an Idle Spectater, but obſerving

how

how his Name is expoſed, will not, can not winck at their Sin; and therefore will lay-hold on a fit opportunity to ſhew them their Sin by their puniſhment: *be ſtill*, ſaith Jehovah, *and know that I am God.* As he is God, and it is his Royal Prerogative, both to puniſh and pardon Sin: So he wants neither Wiſdom nor Juſtice to find out a fit Reaſon and right methods to magnifie thoſe his Attributes, in avenging himſelf on his and our Adverſaries. Therefore it is our Duty to ſtand ſtill, and ſee the Salvation of God, as Omniſcience cannot but ſee all our Afflictions and Tribulations; ſo he wants not an Eye to pitty us, becauſe he loves us, and if he ſees our Diſtreſs, and Loves our Perſons, he will at preſent ſupport us, and at length deliver us, and as he ſees us to Pitty us, ſo to reprove us. for the leaſt misbehaviour under his Rod, either inwardly by piercing Convictions, or outwardly by ſharp ſtripes if when he Afflicts us to ſep[illegible] us from our Sin, we ſhould take an occaſion to increaſe the number of our Sins, either by ſinful Fears or repinings; no wonder if he double his Strokes. God takes great notice how his Children behave themſelves, eſpecially in the hour of Temptation; And if our Thoughts and Conſiderations dwell upon this, we ſhall narrowly watch our own Spirits, that we may Patiently ſubject our ſelves to the will of God in ſuch a Diſpenſation.

FINIS.

THere is a large Treatiſe concerning the Sabbath, containing divers Sermons, preparing to be Printed, if Encouragement be given by Subſcribers: It being a full Confutation of thoſe that keeping the *Jewiſh* Sabbath; in which will be divers new Arguments. By *Benj. Keach.*

50 Bank Side St
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January 29th 1896

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